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Newsroom: RWU Law Hosts Judicial Commission

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Newsroom

RWU Law Hosts Judicial Commission

RWU Law played host Thursday to "an unusually moving" hearing of the Judicial Nominating Commission, which chose five finalists...

The Providence Journal's Katie Mulvaney covered Thursday's meeting of the Judicial Nominating Commission at RWU Law, and filed a story titled, "[5 finalists picked for seat on R.I. District Court.](#)"

BRISTOL, October 29, 2010 — The **Judicial Nominating Commission** Thursday forwarded to the governor the names of five finalists to take retired Judge Stephen Erickson's District Court seat. The list included the deputy chief of the attorney general's criminal division and a longtime member of the commission itself.

Those recommended by the commission are Assistant Attorney General Bethany M. Macktaz Moore; William P. Rampone, a Providence Housing Court judge and long-serving commission member; Stephen M. Miller, whose private practice specializes in real-estate law and estate planning; Christine S. Jabour, a former state prosecutor and District Court magistrate since 2003, and David P. Kerins, chief hearing officer for the state Department of Environmental Management.

Jabour garnered the support of all eight members in attendance, while Rampone and Macktaz Moore each received seven votes. Miller followed with six votes and Kerins, a former East Bay state senator and assistant city solicitor in Newport, with five.

The vote followed **an unusually moving public hearing at the Roger Williams University School of Law** in which one speaker traced one candidate's progress since his teen years, and another told a gripping and emotional tale that left the auditorium in silence.

Patti Hughes held the room spellbound as she relayed in fairytale-style the story of her rape at gunpoint as a college student in Providence a decade ago. Hughes called her prosecutor in the case, Macktaz Moore, the fairy godmother of the tale, a woman who showed empathy, compassion and endless faith in Hughes' own strength.

Now an adult working in the social services field, Hughes said, she has learned to appreciate even further Macktaz Moore's personal sacrifice. They still attend Patriots and Red Sox games annually, and when

asked once by Macktaz Moore if it was painful to see her, Hughes said she replied, "Seeing you reminds me of everything that's right in this world."

Dennis DeJesus, executive director of Rhode Island Special Olympics, described Miller's unwavering support for the state's Special Olympians, including Miller's own son, gold-medal swimmer Evan.

"He was an advocate for every athlete," DeJesus said. He noted that the judicial vacancy was to replace Erickson, who earned a reputation as a champion of mental-health issues in the court. Miller, he said, had shown a commitment to those less fortunate and the intellectually disadvantaged that would make him a logical replacement.

Retired Family Court Judge Howard I. Lipsey praised Jabour's integrity, compassion and love of the law as well as her seven-plus years as a magistrate. She would, he said, be able to easily step into the District Court judge job.

Superior Court Judge Susan E. McGuirl backed Rampone, who served on the commission from 1999 until last year, for his good judgment and skill as a compassionate mediator and Housing Court judge. "He's just a good person," McGuirl said.

District Court Judge J. Terrence Houlihan credited Kerins for his compassion and his ability while acting as a solicitor to send everyone home feeling they had been treated fairly.

Robert H. Humphrey, whose criminal-defense work focuses on drunken driving, domestic violence and other offenses, and Merlyn O'Keefe, who has a general practice and was a longtime solicitor for Block Island, did not make the list.

For full story, click [here](#).